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ABSTRACT

Conducted at a Chapter 1 school serving mainly Hispanic and Black youth, this practicum developed a teacher-directed listening skills program for first grade students. The project goals were to provide auditory training and to increase proficiency in decoding skills. The listening skills program consisted of five components. The physiology of hearing was taught for 1 week. The science of sound was taught for 2 weeks. Listening rules for individuals and members of groups were taught for 1 week. Decoding skill was taught for 32 weeks as part of the reading instruction program. In addition, 4 weeks of instruction were provided in each of the following skill areas: following verbal directions, inferring word meaning, listening for details, listening for sequences, identifying the main idea, discerning fact and fiction, and identifying mood. The evaluation of the practicum indicated that all 38 of the participating students met stated objectives in decoding skills. Although some did not meet objectives for auditory training, positive growth was evident. Recommendations were made for further studies and programs. (RH)

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Listening Instruction:
A Program for First Grade Students

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Listening Instruction:
A Program for First Grade Students

by

Patsy G. Abelleira

Cluster XVIII

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Patsy G. Abelleira under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

August 8, 1987
Date of Final Approval of Report

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ABSTRACT

Listening Instruction: A Program for First Grade Students

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Descriptors: Listening Comprehension/ Auditory Comprehension/ Auditory Perception/ Listening/ Auditory Training/ Aural Training.

This practicum addressed the need of providing a teacher directed listening skills program for first grade students. The project goals were to increase proficiency in decoding skills and auditory training. The model consisted of five components. The first component focused on the physiological aspect of hearing. It was important that students understand the function of the auditory system. The science of sound became the second component. Understanding and establishing rules one should follow for maximum listening power and rules for group discussion became the third component. The fourth and fifth components focused on specific skills of listening such as decoding skills, following verbal directions, inferring word meanings, listening for details, listening for sequence, identifying the main idea, discerning between fact and opinion, and identifying moods.

All of the thirty-eight target students involved in this program met the stated objectives in decoding skills. Although not all of the target students met the stated objectives for auditory training, positive growth was evident. Recommendations were made for further studies and programs in this area.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

This writer is a resident of one of the United States' southern most cities, located on the east coast. The city lies on a bay at the mouth of a river. Because of its inviting tropical weather, it became a recreational center for vacationers. During the 1920's the city became the center of the real-estate boom and millions of dollars flowed into the city bringing new homes, hotels, and resorts. From this point on this area has grown, despite tropical hurricanes, into a large metropolis with a population reported in 1980 by the U.S. Bureau of the Census of 1,625,701.

Demographic data is derived from the United States Department of Commerce Bureau of Census (1983). The population of the city, obtained from the 1980 census, is estimated at 58% Hispanic, 24.3% non-Hispanic Black, 16.8% non-Hispanic White and .9% other. These figures have changed during the past six years with each new wave of immigrants into the United States.

The area has become a major wholesale distribution center between two continents, North America and South America. Tourism is still one of its main industries due to extensive recreational and convention facilities. The city houses a major airport and a major seaport for shipping. Industries include aircraft rebuilding, trade and finance, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, textiles, and many more job facilities too numerous to mention.

The school system is the fourth largest school system in the United States. The District and School Profiles for 1985-86 school year reported a total of 283,769 school age children in public and non-public schools including pre-kindergarten and Alternative and Exceptional Student education programs. The Office of Educational Accountability reported in their Statistical Abstract for 1985-86 the ethnic composition of student population, excluding Alternative and Exceptional Student education, as 76,737 Black non-Hispanic, 96,081 and 62,003 White and other.

The school system is divided into four geographic areas of organized activity aimed at offering the best possible education to its student population. It also

offers valuable educational opportunities to the adult community through the adult/vocational education services and the community school services. There is a cornucopia of educational opportunities available in the area through the school system, two major universities, and a junior college with several campuses conveniently located throughout the county.

This writer taught in a school in one of the four geographic areas of the school system. The school was sixty years old and is located in a large business area, very close to busy thoroughfares. Over the years the school has undergone various structural renovations, overcrowding, and population changes.

The area has changed with each Hispanic exodus from Cuba, Mariel, Nicaragua, South and Central America, and Puerto Rico. Twenty years ago, primarily Jewish, Italian, and Polish families lived in the area in single family homes. Today, the area has changed from a residential area to house businesses, large family units, duplexes, and single family homes. Economically it is a low to middle income section. Two jobs often account for a split authority figure for discipline in the home. In many cases, more than one family share a domain, which helps to

defray the high cost of living. Often extended family members do the rearing of the children. These caretakers are usually the grandmother and grandfather, which also causes a conflict of discipline for the children. The younger families are trying the American way of life, while the older generation continues to follow the Latin culture, which causes other intrafamily conflicts.

The ethnic composition of the school population at this writers work location consisted of 98% Hispanic, 1.99% Anglo, and .01% Black. The enrollment fluctuated between 790 and 820 students and housed kindergarten through fifth grades. These students were served by a competent and resourceful fifty-nine member faculty.

The school was made a Chapter I school in 1983 which was indicative of the high ratio of free and reduced price lunches. This was also an indicator of the number of low to middle income families living in the area.

Curriculum and instruction centered around each child's achievement and those basic skills and concepts necessary for success in the adult world. Emphasis was placed upon a balanced curriculum and specific objectives for each area of instruction. Specific academic programs

were offered in: (a) basic skills, (b) remediation (Chapter I Program), (c) Spanish for kindergarten through fifth grade, (d) English for speakers of other languages for kindergarten through fifth grade, (e) music for second through fifth grade, (f) art for second through fifth grade, and (g) physical education for second through fifth grade. Diagnostic prescriptive programs were received in reading, and mathematics. Computer assisted instruction completed the student curriculum.

Author's Work Setting and Role

The writer has served as a first grade teacher since August of 1974 in the practicum setting. Prior to this, the writer was gainfully employed as a kindergarten teacher for nine years in a local inner city school.

This writer's philosophy of education maintains that teaching young children embodies a multiplicity of responsibilities. Parent-teacher conferences, instruction in specific content areas, minimum basic skills, and individualized diagnostic prescriptions are necessary components to successful teaching. Observing students, identifying exceptionalities, and referring pupils for appropriate placement were additional tasks performed by this writer.

Extra curricular activities in the practicum setting were membership on the Faculty Council, Steering Committee, Parent Teacher Association member, Grade Level Chairperson, Faculty Social Committee, and Peer Teacher.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Many students can hear perfectly well, nevertheless have a severe handicap. They are "hard of listening." First grade students at this writer's work location needed an effective program in listening instruction. It is crucial that students be taught how to listen. Teachers are always saying, "Why can't they listen?" "PLEASE, LISTEN!" can be heard too many times during a visit to a classroom. Johnson (1959) wrote that more failures in academic and social growth can be traced to inability to listen than to any other single aspect of the language arts. We must not take for granted that a person can listen because he can hear.

Listening instruction in most schools, as at this writer's work location, had been neglected. The reasons for its neglect were many and varied, but one explanation stood out: listening skills were taken for granted. The instructional emphases was being placed on reading,

writing, and mathematics with the assumption that hearing would entail listening. There was a considerable difference between hearing and listening, and the challenge was in teaching students the art of skillful listening.

The need for concern about students' listening skills at the author's work setting was reflected in the Stanford Achievement Test scores in listening comprehension for 1985-86. Only 28% of the students in first grade scored above the fifth stanine. Further, only 17% of the school's student population scored above the fifth stanine in listening comprehension on the Stanford Achievement Test. This data supported an indisputable need for an effective program in listening instruction.

The school's administration had placed priority, concern, and interest in improving students' listening skills. However, interest and concern could not solve the problem. By implementing a listening instruction program at the first grade level, this writer has established a viable foundation that supports the importance of teaching listening as a separate skill.

The improvement of test scores, academic success, and

social growth require pupils to listen. Students can improve in listening ability as a result of planned instruction. This writer believed, as do others, that listening should be viewed and taught as a separate language skill. First grade students are not taught listening skills as a separate subject. Through this practicum this writer has addressed this problem.

Problem Documentation

The nation's current concern and interest in standardized tests, competency tests, and assessment tests as proof of student performance in school and as prescriptions for excellence have intensified the need for students to have better listening skills. Devine (1982) stated that more and more, teachers and parents are concerned about student listening skills. "Students aren't learning as much as they could," it is said, "because they don't know how to listen purposely and accurately." This ability is important in all areas of learning.

Documentation of this problem was evidenced at this writer's work location through the Stanford Achievement tests scores for 1985-86. The results of this test indicated 72% of the first grade students scored below the

fifth stanine in the area of listening comprehension. Further, 17% of these students made no change in their stanine score from 1984-85 to 1985-86 in listening comprehension. These data were significant in that it documented this writer's belief that the elementary school could make a significant contribution to the improvement of learning if the students received a sound foundation in listening skills.

Causative Analysis

The four ways in which language functions in school and in life are in listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Listening is the first to operate in the life of a normal individual and the one that is used more than any other. It is ironic that the activity in which we engage the most in the one that is the least taught in today's classrooms. Although increasing attention is being directed toward this language area, the number of studies and research concerning listening is considerably less than one finds in many other fields.

In most elementary curricula, teaching listening as a separate skill is not part of the daily program. Educators seem to assume that growth in listening is a

natural process of maturation and that students will automatically develop the necessary skills, attitudes, and habits.

Devine (1982) found the following:

> Listening skills in most schools has been neglected. Listening is such an intrinsic part of schooling that few educational theorists and planners have bothered to examine it within the total context of teaching and learning. It is so basic to the educational enterprise that most learning theorists are not conscious of it. It plays such a supportive role in the daily drama of most classrooms that many teachers overlook it. Listening--the most used and perhaps most important of the language (and learning) arts--has been lost sight of in the business of running schools. (p. 1)

College students being trained as teachers are told that listening is the first language skill and the other language skills will follow. After becoming a classroom

teacher, those same students are faced with instructional materials that are highly structured, have time requirements, stress teacher accountability, and require student testing as proof of student performance. These factors seem to place very little importance on listening as a skill which should be taught. Lundsteen (1979) wrote that this neglect seems unwise, since listening may be the first step in unlocking progress in any other area related to language--that means science, history, math, the whole of education.

The technological revolution plays an important role in teaching and learning listening skills. The advent of television and recently, computers, has effected students' ability to communicate. No one can escape the impact of the technological revolution. The results of this proliferation of readymade visual creations has created an unsettling feeling that listening has become less important as a skill that needs to be taught. Thus, the ability to think has been affected. This writer is not against change if it is effective and educators remain aware of the immense responsibility and dedication necessary for an effective learning program.

There are two other factors which are probable causes

for not teaching listening as a separate part of the language program. In the past listening was not carefully characterized and defined. However, this problem has been researched to the point where teachers can be more enthusiastic about its value and can develop effective programs. Second, if teachers do become interested in implementing a listening program, the funding for equipment and materials may not be readily available.

In summary, one can attribute several major causes to the lack of interest in listening instruction as a separate and important part of the learning process.

The writer addressed these causal factors in the previous paragraphs. All of these factors were contributors to the students inability to listen effectively. However, this writer was motivated to believe that the assumption, "students hear automatically means they can listen", was the key casual factor for the absence of listening instructions as a separate subject in the classroom.

The Related Literature

No channel of communication is more important than listening. It represents the young child's sole contact with language for approximately the first year of his/her

life and remains consistently important throughout childhood and adulthood. On an average day, we probably spend more time in listening than we do any other single activity. An early study by Rankin (1928) discovered that approximately 42% of the day was spent in listening, 32% in speaking, and the remaining 25% in reading and writing combined. Since Rankin, other researchers such as Corey (1940) and Wilt (1950) compared Rankin's figures. Their results were about the same: listening remains the basic communication during the course of daily activities.

Rankin (1928) also examined instructional time devoted to teaching basic communication skills. He reported that schools committed virtually all of their communication skills instructional time to teaching reading and writing with very little time given to speaking and listening instruction.

Corey's (1940) study revealed that teachers talked from 54% of the classtime in elementary school to 67% in high school. Studies by Nichols and Stevens (1957), and Martgarf (1957) revealed that 90% of first graders were listening when the teacher interrupted herself to check listening. About 80% of the second graders when checked were listening to the teacher. By the time those students

entered junior high school, only 47% were listening. Only 28% of high school students, when checked, were listening to the teacher.

Clearly, if students have not been taught how to listen, learning is effected. Further, as stated by Swanson (1984), students without listening training tend to have their listening skills eroded through their public school experience. This does not seem to be surprising when one considers the number of adults who freely admit that their listening powers are limited and insist that they must "see" to retain information.

Teachers assume that growth in listening is a natural process of maturation and that children will automatically develop the necessary skills, attitudes, and habits. Witty and Sizemore (1958), Duker (1970), Olsen (1966), Russell (1964), Devine (1984), and Oakland (1969) indicated that listening becomes a less effective method of learning as one grows older and that progressive training in listening skills can improve learning performance.

Educators recognize the importance of listening instruction, but merely recognizing its importance is not

enough. We require students to listen, but do we teach them how to listen? Lundsteen (1979) wrote that the lack of systematic training in listening skills takes its toll. Bad habits practiced for a lifetime are hard to eradicate. If we wait to provide listening instruction to students, it may be to late.

According to Devine (1982) listening can be taught. Hollow (1955) and Pratt (1956) reported in their studies that structured lessons in listening comprehension over a period of time did increase listening ability. They were able to statistically demonstrate that children in elementary school could be taught to listen better.

Devine (1982) wrote that listening is not simply attention. Listening involves more than attention but is impossible without attention. According to Lundsteen (1979) students must convert spoken sounds to "meaning in the mind."

Devine (1982) states:

> The relationship between listening and thinking is still being studied by researchers, but at this point it seems clear that many of the operations involved

> in listening--especially higher-level kinds of listening--are mental operations. Listening at its most basic level is simply a matter of processing the incoming meaningful sounds into syntactical and units so that the listener may make sense of the sounds. Listening at its basic level is like decoding in reading. However, thinking and the mental operations associated with it are involved in both decoding and listening. (p. 3)

Students use a wide variety of listening skills during the school day. Attentive listening is not enough. Thinking is definitely a part of the skill of listening. According to Devine (1982) teachers that frequently say to students, "You are not listening to me," really means, "You are not thinking along with me." Listening is much more than simply paying attention; listening involves facts of reasoning and thinking of a very high order. Students need to know what to think about as they listen. Critical listening precedes critical thinking and is basic to it when students are given lessons orally. It is, therefore, imperative that educators not assume a natural carryover from critical reading to critical thinking.

Even though both contain many identical skills, they are dissimilar in many ways. Reading can be accomplished at one's own rate and time permits one to read and re-read if necessary. When one is required to listen, the pace is not of his/her choice. The speaker is in control and the listener cannot pause for reflection or go back to clarify a point.

Researchers continue to debate about teaching reading skills and the best way to teach them. Teaching listening skills continues to be argued by researchers. This writer felt, as did Devine (1982), that the assumption underlying any program for developing listening ability requires listening be viewed as a composite of separate teachable skills.

The interrelationships existing among the language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening imply that teachers should relate them when it is functionally desirable. However, they should be taught as separate subjects in order to master specific skills basic to that subject.

Scope and sequence and teaching strategies are basic to teaching reading, writing, and speaking. Teachers follow these strategies as though they were written in

stone. Listening, on the other hand, seems to have no content of its own. It is part of the entire curriculum with no special skills-based program of its own. This was surprising when one noted that elementary students spent from half to two-thirds of their school day listening. If students are not taught the art of listening as a separate skill, consider how much they are missing when they cannot achieve full understanding through listening or are limited in their appreciation of oral presentations and even music. Further, consider the loss of learning power when effective listening is not present in the classroom. The debate continues to go on with regard to students being intelligent because they possess high order listening skills, or were they born with this power. This writer did not debate this statement, she only reiterated Swanson's (1984) belief that clearly, if students have not learned to listen, they cannot listen to learn.

Furness (1957) claimed that auding is the more adequate term for listening and defined it as consisting of at least six processes: (a) hearing, (b) listening, (c) recognizing spoken language, (d) interpreting oral symbols, (e) supplementing meaning and knowledge of the symbols, and (f) being aware of facts or assumptions not uttered.

There is considerable difference between hearing and listening. Listening involves many skills while hearing refers to the perception of sound. Wepman (1960) made a distinction between levels of hearing in terms of acuity, understanding, discrimination, and retention. Strickland (1957) described levels of listening in terms of:

1. Little conscious listening and then only when interest is closely related.
2. Half listening while holding on to own ideas.
3. Listening passively with little or no reaction.
4. Off again - on again listening using own experiences in relation to what is being spoken.
5. Listening and responding because of own experiences.
6. Listening with question and comment reactions.
7. Listening with emotional and mental participation.
8. Listening with a meeting of the minds.

From these comparisons one could summarize that listening and hearing could not be used interchangeably.

There is a world of difference between them. Listening differs from hearing in the degree of understanding and effort involved. Listening takes effort and training. The quality of listening that children do has a direct bearing on learning, test taking, study habits, and communications. Their elementary school experience will determine their powers of listening. By not teaching listening skills as a separate and distinct language area, educators are seriously handicapping students' learning abilities.

Teaching listening in the classroom is no easy task. A high priority concern is teachers' self-assessment both in their own listening skills and how they teach listening skills. Their personality and behavior greatly influence the teaching and learning of listening skills in students. They must, out of necessity, be an example of an attentive listener. Teachers become so engrossed in their own lessons and monologue that they, too often, neglect students' contributions or ignore the fact that students aren't really listening. Many times teachers become too busy to listen to students. Teachers want students to be good listeners while they continue to set a poor example of a good listener. Their example of a good listener, as well as wise and discriminating use of language, can be

the key to positive listening habits in students'.

Devine (1982) reported in his book, Listening Skills Schoolwide, a checklist which was developed by a group of secondary school teachers. This checklist is an excellent aid for teachers in assessing their listening program. This writer found this list invaluable in her efforts to initiate an effective listening program for first grade students.

A suggested scope and sequence for basic listening skills was developed by Devine (1982). Through this master plan, a framework for a listening skills program could be developed.

From this literature search this writer concluded that, listening is a major channel of communication, many individuals were seriously incapacitated in their listening abilities, growth in listening was not a natural accompaniment of maturation, and that listening could be improved through proper training in listening skills during the course of a student's elementary school years. Educators needed to utilize the hundreds of hours students spent listening in class, as proof of the need for planned listening instruction. Listening could not be left to chance or taken for granted, listening must be taught.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

Listening is an intrinsic part of schooling that tends to be overlooked as a separate learning skill. This practicum was designed for the purpose of assisting first grade students in benefiting from a separate program of listening instruction administered by the classroom teacher. To accomplish this goal the author developed and implemented a highly structured and innovative listening program for first grade students who were deficient in this area.

Behavioral Expectations

Listening seems to have no content of its own in present day classrooms. This writer was of the opinion that a good and progressive foundation in listening skills has a direct bearing on learning. The implementation of this project attempted to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Given an oral list of 21 words, students

would select and circle the initial consonant for each word with 100% accuracy on the Reading Systems/Very Plain test for decoding skills.

2. Given an oral list of 13 words, students would select and circle the final consonant for each word with 100% accuracy on the Reading Systems/Very Plain test for decoding skills.
3. Given an oral list of 5 words, students would select and circle the initial "short" vowel sound with 100% accuracy on the Reading Systems/Very Plain test for decoding skills.
4. Given an oral list of 5 words, students would select and circle the medial "short" vowel sound with 100% accuracy on the Reading Systems/Very Plain test for decoding skills.
5. Given an oral recognition memory sequence test with a raw score of 110, 100% of the students would obtain a raw score of 96 to 100 on the Goldman Fristoe Woodcock Auditory Memory Test.
6. Given an oral test for memory for content

with a raw score of 32, 100% of the students would obtain a raw score of 23 to 26 on the Goldman Fristoe Woodcock Auditory Memory Test.

7. Given a memory for sequence test with a raw score of 84, 100% of the students would obtain a raw score of 55 to 59 on the Goldman Fristoe Woodcock Auditory Memory Test.

These seven expectations were measured by using Reading Systems/Very Plain decoding test written and published by the school board and the Goldman Fristoe Woodcock Auditory Memory Test. A pre and post/test was given to each of the students involved in the implementation of this practicum using both these assessment forms.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

The significance of this practicum was to determine the effectiveness of listening instruction for first grade students. Therefore, keeping accurate records, recording lesson plans, and evaluation of those materials used during the course of the project were built in requirements. The results of these records, of necessity,

included records of unexpected events.

Evaluation Instruments

A few standardized tests in listening had been developed. However, this writer was unable to find a suitable test for the major portion of this project. After talking with representatives from American Guidance Service, Inc., this writer chose the Goldman Fristoe Woodcock Auditory Memory Test. This assessment had been primarily used by speech therapists. The companies' representatives were agreeable to its use in this project as a pre and post assessment, as well as its being used to address another skill area.

Decoding skills objectives were measured by a pre and posttest developed by the school board. This test was part of the Reading Systems/Very Plain diagnostic program for first grade students, and was used in the reading curriculum of this school.

Teachers and students involved in this project were expected to follow the planned curriculum for listening instruction. Separate folders containing each student's work, related to listening, were kept up to date throughout the implementation of this project. In this

way pretesting provided evidence of listening skills prior to implementation of this project, and posttesting provided comparable growth results.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Low student test scores in listening comprehension at this writer's work location had initiated concern about listening skills. As a first grade teacher, this writer was in the position to implement a first grade listening instruction program. The importance of this program's results validated the initiation of a schoolwide listening program.

Johnson (1959) addressed the problems of students' inability to listen by writing; more failures in academic and social growth can be traced to inability to listen than to any other single aspect of the language arts. We must not take for granted that a person can listen because he can hear.

The target school's curriculum was inundated with diagnostic prescriptive programs in reading, writing, and mathematics. Listening skills instruction was not addressed as a skill in and of itself. Consider the fact

that elementary students spend from half to two-thirds of their day listening. It is surprising that the activity students engage in the most is the one that is taught the least to students in today's classrooms.

A review of the literature strongly supported the premise that listening could and should be taught. However, educators must first implement programs that incorporate listening instruction in the daily learning program as a separate language subject with its own value.

Devine (1982) wrote that listening instruction in most schools has been neglected. He gave reasons for this neglect as: (a) listening skills are taken for granted, (b) it is such an intrinsic part of the schooling that few theorists and planners see it as a separate subject, (c) many teachers overlook it because its so entwined in the daily program, and (d) it has simply been lost sight of as a subject with valid content.

There were several avenues open to solutions for this problem. The first, was the initiation of a schoolwide listening program. This, however, was impractical without a thorough study of teaching strategies, available materials, and teacher training.

Second, teachers could individually address the problem. This would result in fragmented and random instruction with very little value as a total school learning experience.

Third, the school system could address the problem of poor listening skills. This, of course, had value. However, writing a listening scope and sequence program and teacher training would take time. Another factor would be the school system's interest in seeing the value in such a program.

It was this writer's opinion that students improve in listening ability as a result of planned instruction. Thus, this author decided to address this problem with first grade students. The results of this project has become the foundation for a schoolwide listening instruction program at this writer's work site.

Description of Selected Solutions

Once the importance and feasibility of developing and implementing a listening program for first grade students had been verified through analysis of the literature, analysis of the test data, and input from school's administration, the question of appropriate materials and

sequencing of instruction was considered and assessed. Factors such as student's bilingual ability and time available for direct instruction had to be considered.

The model, as developed by the writer, consisted of five components. The first component focused on the physiological aspect of hearing. It was important that the students understand the function of the auditory system. The science of sound became the second component. Understanding and establishing rules one should follow for maximum listening power and rules for group discussion became the third component. The fourth and fifth components focused on specific skills of listening such as decoding skills, following verbal directions, inferring word meanings, listening for details, listening for sequence, identifying the main idea, discerning between fact and opinion, and identifying moods.

The educators involved in this program studied the teacher's Self-Assessment Checklist from Devine (1982). A meeting was planned prior to implementation to discuss testing, strategies, lesson plans, and materials. A sample lesson plan form was made. (see Appendix A) Materials and equipment had been ordered by the writer. (see Appendix B) Students were given listening instruction

twenty minutes each day. Some lessons took longer, while others were shorter. The goal was to expose students to direct listening instruction for a minimum of one hour and forty minutes each week.

Report of Action Taken

The major objective of this program was to enhance listening skills in a target population of first grade students. Student achievement in listening would be more attainable if they were exposed to a listening program which incorporated a strategy of direct teaching of listening skills rather than the casual methods of indirect presentation, practiced during the regular language arts programs. Therefore, the teacher became the pivot of the listening instruction program. The reasons for this were twofold. First, students in first grade must have direct instruction in any learning concepts that may be new to their schematic system. Second, teacher awareness of their position of role model and conscious efforts to apply listening skills in other areas were important to the success of the program.

The teachers instructed the total class rather than a small group or individuals. The lessons were presented in this way because of limited time and prearranged

scheduling of other curricular activities on a school-wide basis. There was no specific time of day stated for the presentation of a listening lesson. The focus was on a twenty minute lesson each day at a time most convenient for their particular schedule. These lessons were implemented daily for thirty-two weeks.

The elements incorporated into each lesson plan were:

1. Time given to presentation of lesson.
2. Objective description of listening skill.
3. Materials/ equipment used.
4. Evaluation.

A sample lesson plan form was written. (see Appendix A) A progression of daily lessons for thirty-two weeks were presented. For two weeks prior to implementation and after implementation, this writer pre and posttested the target students. The following sequence of lessons were used:

1. A one week presentation on the physiological aspect of hearing - component one.
2. A two week presentation on the science of sound - component two.
3. A one week presentation on listening rules as an individual and in a group - component three. (These became part of the daily learning process

and can be found in Appendix E).

4. Thirty-two weeks of decoding skills - component four. (These became part of the reading instruction program).
5. Four weeks on following verbal directions - component four.
6. Four weeks on inferring word meaning - component five.
7. Four weeks on listening for details - component five.
8. Four weeks on listening for sequence - component five.
9. Four weeks on identifying the main idea - component five.
10. Four weeks on discerning between fact and opinion - component five.
11. Four weeks on identifying mood - component five.

This sequencing of lessons was not intended to override the many theories on listening nor was it expected to be supported by those researching developmental listening programs. These programs are few in number and contradict each other in content. The sequence and the components in this listening skills program were synthesized from research into the literature

on listening, from commercial materials, and from the writer's twenty-three years of teaching experience.

In developing the sequence of lesson presentations the writer referred to Russell's (1959) sequence of differences among children first entering school. They are:

(1) auditory acuity, or sensitivity of hearing as measured by the amount of sound energy necessary for a person to hear.

(2) auditory discrimination, or the ability to distinguish sounds which are somewhat alike, such as the sounds of letters p and b or the words "seeing" and "ceiling."

(3) auditory comprehension, or the ability to understand and remember meanings back of the work signals. (p. 2)

Auditory acuity became the first focus and component of instruction. Students, if they are to focus on listening, need to know more about the physiological aspect of hearing.

The first week of daily instruction focused on the ear. The students were involved in lessons that described

the ear, labeled the parts of the ear, and through the use of visual aids, drew their own version of the ear. Further, the students were able to give more meaning to safety rules surrounding the care of the ear.

The second component was presented in a two week daily presentation. This component became the science of sound. What is sound? To answer this question, the target students were exposed to Miller's (1965) book, Sound. This book has attractive illustrations combined with lively explanations which provided students with a better understanding of the scientific principles of sound. Further, concrete experiments could be used by using the book as a reference.

The flow of these two components lead the program into the third component. The students and teachers devoted one week of daily lessons to discussing and writing rules for listening as an individual and listening in a group. (see Appendix C) These rules became part of the daily learning process.

The fourth component focused on auditory discrimination using decoding skills as the target element. Because of the available listening materials and

the requirements of the county reading program, this component became a daily lesson incorporated in the reading program for the full thirty-two weeks. Further, a technique for teaching reading and listening at the same time was implemented by the participating teachers. The students were divided into three groups. Lesson plans reflected three stations of activity. These stations were labeled listening, follow up, and instruction. Each group of students moved about every 20 to 25 minutes to one of three stations. This cycle was complete when each group of students had completed the work in each of the three stations. The listening station presented lessons in decoding skills through the use of a tape recorder, earphones, worksheets, and taped lessons. Commercial materials were used in the listening station (see Appendix A). The only time during the reading cycle, the students had direct instruction from the teacher was during the preinstruction prior to starting the daily reading cycle and at the instruction station during the reading cycle. The follow up station contained work the students could do independently and was related to the reading lesson or the lesson used in the listening station. A daily reading lesson plan form was written. (see Appendix D)

The fifth component focused on auditory

comprehension. Bloom (1956), in his Taxonomy, describes six levels of thought processes. He describes these as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. With this in mind, the writer identified seven units of study that progressed from attentive listening to analytic or critical listening. The first of these units was four weeks of daily lessons on following verbal directions. Commercial materials were used to implement these lessons. (see Appendix B) When the students were involved in these lessons they were using the first three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

The next step became inferring word meaning. These lessons were given daily for four weeks. The introduction of these lessons brought the students to a higher level of listening and used all six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. From this point on the students were introduced to lessons requiring attentive as well as critical listening. Each of the following units of listening instructions had a daily, four week instruction span: (a) listening for detail, (b) listening for sequence, (c) identifying the main idea, (d) discerning fact and opinion, and (e) identifying mood.

From this sequence one can readily see that the

students were gradually exposed to a higher level of listening. They were using the skill of listening to make evaluations and judgements.

Those teachers involved in the implementation of this program wrote their own lesson plans using the library of available commercial materials. (see Appendix B) However, games for teaching listening skills were also used. If the reader is interested in listening games please obtain Russell's (1959) book, Listening Aids Through The Grades. Russell (1959) states that what happens in classrooms is dependent upon materials available to the teacher and the pupil. This book as well as commercial materials were readily available to the teachers implementing this program and were the main sources used for the presentation of this program. Another invaluable source was Laird's (1981) Listening Comprehension Skills Kit Level A. His program is designed to make listening a solid part of students' skills for learning by providing practice in essential listening comprehension skills.

Preparing the students for each lesson became part of each presentation. This involved the review of rules for individual listening as well as for group discussion. (see Appendix C) In general, the goal was to get the

class in an attentive situation, as this was essential to the success of the program. Students were asked to listen carefully, think before they responded, and respond in a manner that was clear and concise.

There were very few difficulties encountered during the implementation of this program. Withdrawal and reentry of students was a minor problem. However, the repetitiveness of the major elements of the program gave new students a feeling of comfort as they became part of this learning process. There were seven non-independent speakers of English in the target group. The direct approach to teaching listening skills and the highly structured English for Speakers of Other Languages program appeared to result in a strengthening and extension of English proficiency.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

There were forty target students initially involved in the listening program. During the course of its implementation, ten of these students transferred to other schools and eight new students were placed in the program. These students were immediately pretested and given an intense overview of the skills they had missed. As a result of these changes there were thirty eight students that completed this listening skills program.

The first four objectives listed in chapter three of this report were:

1. Given an oral list of 21 words, students would select and circle the initial consonant for each word with 100% accuracy on the Reading Systems/ Very Plain test for decoding skills.
2. Given an oral list of 13 words, students would select and circle the final consonant for each word with 100% accuracy on the Reading Systems/

Very Plain test for decoding skills.

3. Given an oral list of 5 words, students would select and circle the initial "short" vowel sound with 100% accuracy on the Reading Systems/ Very Plain test for decoding skills.
4. Given an oral list of 5 words, students would select and circle the medial "short" vowel sound with 100% accuracy on the Reading Systems/Very Plain test for decoding skills.

Objective one required 21 responses. The target students were given an oral list of 21 words. After each word was said, the students were asked to circle one of four consonants as the initial sound in the word they heard. As shown in Table 1, the responses ranged from no correct responses to 20 correct responses.

A significant number of students were unable to distinguish between letter sounds on the pretest. This inability could have been caused by hearing of letter names rather than letter sounds.

Table 1

Pretest and Posttest Student Responses on Initial Consonants

Test	Number of Students	Correct Responses	Percent of Accuracy
Pretest	2	0	0
	1	1	4
	2	5	23
	1	9	48
	1	11	52
	1	13	61
	2	14	66
	1	15	71
	6	16	76
	14	17	80
	3	18	85
	3	19	90
	1	20	95
Posttest	38	21	100

Note. Number of students tested = 38

Maximum Score = 21

There is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest. The posttest indicates marked improvement of the target population of thirty-eight students. All participants scored the maximum correct responses with 100% accuracy.

Objective two required auditory recognition of final consonant sounds when heard in a word. The students were given an oral list of 13 words. After each word was said the students selected one out of four consonants that made the sound heard at the end of each list word. The student's responses on the pretest are interesting in that students entering first grade are not expected to score high on this particular skill. However, ten out of the thirty-eight target students achieved a score of ten out of thirteen correct responses on the pretest. The variables involved in discussing this performance are many and are not the purpose of this report.

Table 2

Pretest and Posttest Student Responses on Final Consonants

Test	Number of Students	Correct Responses	Percent of Accuracy
Pretest	4	0	0
	1	3	23
	1	4	30
	2	5	38
	2	6	46
	1	8	61
	1	9	69
	10	10	76
	14	11	84
	2	12	92
Posttest	38	13	100

Note. Number of students tested = 38

Maximum Score = 13

It is significant to state that all thirty-eight target students scored the maximum of 13 correct responses on the posttest, as indicated in Table 2, with 100% accuracy.

Objectives three focused on the skill of auditory recognition of short vowel sounds in the initial position in a word. This test had five correct responses as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Pretest and Posttest Student Responses on Short Vowels in Initial Position

Test	Number of Students	Correct Responses	Percent of Accuracy
Pretest	6	0	0
	4	1	20
	12	2	40
	14	3	60
	2	4	80
Posttest	38	5	100

Note. Number of students tested = 38

Maximum Score = 5

Further support for a structured listening program can be found when looking at the posttest scores on short vowels in the initial position. The target population of

thirty-eight students obtained the maximum score of five with 100% accuracy.

The significant achievement of the thirty-eight target students is further shown in Table 4. The pretest results reflect that a small number of students do have a working knowledge of vowels. Planned instruction and a structured listening program presented an opportunity for all thirty-eight participants to score the maximum of five on the posttest on short vowels in the medial position.

Table 4

Pretest and Posttest Student Responses on Short Vowels in Medial Position

Test	Number of Students	Correct Responses	Percent of Accuracy
Pretest	8	0	0
	4	1	20
	14	2	40
	11	3	60
	1	4	80
Posttest	38	5	100

Note. Number of students tested = 38

Maximum Score = 5

The results of the pretests on the initial and medial vowels indicates that approximately four percent of the students had a working knowledge of vowel sounds. This was surprising to the writer because of the bilingual background of the students. Again, there are many factors that could be considered as contributors to these results. However, to gain additional insight into the cause of these results would require further studies and were not the goals of this report. The posttest on the initial and medial vowels were given and the thirty-eight target students achieved the maximum score of five on both tests with 100% accuracy.

Many factors can be considered in contributing to the positive results obtained on these posttests. However, the focus was on teaching listening skills. This writer believes that the learning environment created by this focus was the contributing factor to the students' success on these four objectives.

The Goldman-Fristoe-Woodcock Auditory Memory Test (G-F-W Memory) were designed to assess three aspects of short-term auditory memory performance. However, this writer saw their value in terms of measuring active or attentive listening. Test one is Recognition Memory, test

two is Memory for Content, and test three is Memory for Sequence. Objectives five through seven as listed in chapter three of this report were as follows:

5. Given an oral recognition memory sequence test with a raw score of 110, 100% of the students would obtain a raw score of 96 to 100 on the G-F-W Memory Tests.
6. Given an oral test for memory content with a raw score of 32, 100% of the students would obtain a raw score of 23 to 26 on the G-F-W Memory Tests.
7. Given a memory for sequence test with a raw score of 84, 100% of the students would obtain a raw score of 55 to 59 on the G-F-W Memory Tests.

All of the aforesaid objectives were not met as stated. However, this writer does not want the reader to misinterpret this failure. By showing graphic representations significant growth did occur.

Russell (1959) states that listening is not just one thing. Listening calls for differing types of cognitive input and responses depending upon the expectations. The three components of the G-F-W Recognition Memory Test were used as a pretest and a posttest during the implementation of this program. These tests were administered by the

writer to each individual child before implementation and after implementation.

The first component test used auditory discrimination as well as literal comprehension through recall. As seen in Table 5, the target students performed somewhat successfully on the pretest. In comparison their scores were significantly higher on the posttest.

Table 5

Pretest and Posttest Performance Scores of Students on the Recognition Memory Test

Test	Number of Students	Correct Responses	Percent of Accuracy
Pretest	2	55 - 60	57 - 60
	2	61 - 65	63 - 65
	2	66 - 70	68 - 70
	5	71 - 75	74 - 75
	5	76 - 80	79 - 80
	7	81 - 90	84 - 90
	7	91 - 95	94 - 95
	8	96 - 100	100 - 100
Posttest	3	85 - 90	88 - 90
	6	91 - 95	94 - 98
	25	96 - 100	100 - 100
	4	105 - 110	100 - 100

Note. Number of students tested = 38

Total possible score = 110

Desired score = 96 - 100

The results of the posttest, as indicated in Table 5, show significantly higher scores. Of the thirty-eight target students tested twenty-nine achieved the desired raw score of 96-100, with 100% accuracy on the G-F-W Recognition Memory Test.

The second test in the G-F-W Auditory Tests required students to listen for content. It is apparent that this test is more difficult. A significant difference in achievement between the pretest and the posttest can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6

Pretest and Posttest Performance Scores by Students on the Memory for Content Test

Test	Number of Students	Correct Responses	Percent of Accuracy
Pretest	3	5 - 10	21 - 38
	15	11 - 15	47 - 57
	18	16 - 20	69 - 76
	2	21 - 25	91 - 96
Posttest	3	15 - 19	65 - 73
	32	20 - 24	86 - 92
	3	24 - 26	100 - 100

Note. Number of students tested = 38

Total possible score = 32

Desired score = 23 - 26

The structured listening program caused a significant difference in achievement on the Memory for Content Test. Of the thirty-eight students tested on the posttest, thirty-five achieved the desired raw score of 23-26 with 100% accuracy.

Sequencing details correctly is a very important listening skill to learn. The third test of the G-F-W Auditory Tests requires students to listen for sequence. From the results of this pretest and posttest, as shown in Table 7, it can be concluded that the students did not achieve the writer's desired raw score of 55-59.

Table 7

Pretest and Posttest Performance Scores by Students on the Memory for Sequence Test

Test	Number of Students	Correct Responses	Percent of Accuracy
Pretest	7	13 - 18	23 - 30
	8	19 - 23	34 - 38
	11	24 - 28	43 - 47
	8	29 - 33	52 - 58
	4	34 - 38	61 - 64
Posttest	7	33 - 37	58 - 62
	6	38 - 42	64 - 71
	8	43 - 47	78 - 79
	7	48 - 52	87 - 88
	9	53 - 57	96 - 96

Note. Number of students tested = 38

Total possible score = 84

Desired score = 55 - 59

A comparison of the prestest and posttest on the Memory for Sequence Test indicates an increased achievement in this area. As a result of a structured listening program, the target students increased their raw scores and percent of accuracy on the Memory for Sequence Test as graphically represented in Table 7.

Increased student achievement in listening skills was

the desired outcome of this directed listening program. The performance of the thirty-eight target students on the four posttests in decoding skills and the growth in raw scores on the three posttests of the Goldman-Fristoe-Woodcock Auditory Memory Test reflect a significant gain in listening ability. Listening is a skill. It can be improved through training and practice. The results of this program show sufficient evidence of positive outcomes when formal attention is given to teaching listening skills.

Conclusion

The ability to listen is one of the most important skills one can obtain unless one is aurally handicapped. Children begin their learning through listening and it continues to be their primary source for acquiring skills throughout their school years. Listening is an integral part of all language activities. Priorities in language arts are reading, writing, speaking, and listening. With listening being the last of the priorities it receives the least attention. Yet, it is a skill that must also be acquired through direct instruction.

Listening exists as a separate factor and listening can be taught were reported in studies by Pratt (1956),

Lundsteen (1979), Devine (1982) and others. Auditory skills are a necessary foundation for academic success.

The students and educators involved in this program were enthusiastic about its presentation and motivated to achieve. Our motto became, "Listening is the 'L' in Learning," and was published in the school's newspaper.

One of the many exciting materials used in the program was Laird's (1981) Listening Comprehension Skills Kit Level A. Educators were impressed with its presentation and content and students were highly motivated by the activities the kit contained.

The decoding skills tapes allowed educators to remodel their reading program. (see Appendix B) This gave students more time with structured listening lessons. The stations were named instruction, follow-up, and listening. The students were divided into three groups, with each group moving to different stations every 20 to 25 minutes. The teacher gave total group instruction prior to each day's lesson, and the students saw her in the instruction station as they moved from station to station during the reading cycle. The reading cycle ended when all three groups had completed the work in each station. Awareness

on the part of the educators involved in the program and student interest became part of the total day's learning experience.

The purpose of this program was more than fulfilled. A listening program was designed for first grade. There was significant growth in listening skills. Educators in the school became aware of the importance of teaching listening skills. The writer initiated an on site workshop on teaching listening skills through the Teacher Education Center and 25 of the 35 classroom teachers attended. Further, the assistant principal and principal cooperated fully in ordering desired materials for all the classroom teachers interested in presenting a structured listening program to their students. A significant growth was shown in stanine scores in all areas of the Stanford Achievement Test for 1986-87.

Kellogg (1966) states that a great potential exists to stimulate and refine the thinking processes of young children through a well-designed listening program. Listening instruction should have a prominent place in the instructional program. All children and adults listen unless aurally handicapped. Kellogg (1966) further stated that there should be little argument against the

deliberate stimulation of consciousness on the part of humankind; that is, awareness and purposeful direction of one's mental processes. The development of the skills of listening comprehension will result in increased consciousness.

Recommendations

Through the design and implementation of this program to increase listening skills this writer discovered that there is a great need for a developmental language listening program. A good model could be used as a prototype and extended in its framework to include other conceptual listening skills.

The vagueness of the literature presently available leaves much to be desired. A real need can be found in the areas of sequencing of instruction in listening skills as well as developmental levels of instruction in listening skills.

Because listening is the first skill that should be taught, curriculum writers should rethink their designs and place instruction in listening before introducing the basic skills of reading, writing, and math. By placing these skills in the proper order, children all over our

country would show gains such as found in this practicum, and the business of education would be more rewarding for both children and teachers as well.

Dissemination

During the implementation of this program the writer presented its content, as a guest speaker, to a graduate Language Arts class at a local University.

Through contact with the Teacher Education Center, this writer initiated a workshop in teaching listening skills for the on site school's instructors. This program has become an ongoing workshop offering to all of the teachers in the target county. Further, The Teacher Education Center of the target county has requested from this writer all of the necessary information they will need to incorporate the materials from this practicum into this county-wide workshop which they are now offering to teachers.

Because of the outgrowth of interest from the target school's administration and the classroom teachers, an on site schoolwide program has been initiated. This entailed ordering material for each classroom teacher to aid them in implementing a directed listening program.

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APPENDIX A

LISTENING INSTRUCTION
A SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN FORMAT

Week of: _____

Lesson Plan For First Grade Listening Instruction Program			
Date/Lesson Time	Objective Description Of Listening Skill	Materials/Equipment Used	Evaluation

APPENDIX B

A LIST OF SELECTED
TEACHING MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT
FOR THE FIRST GRADE LISTENING INSTRUCTION PROGRAM 66

Brooks, B. (1977). Basic Reading Comprehension Gr. 1 (12 Cassettes, 24 Lessons No. R-1), Jonesboro, AR: ESP, Inc.

Brooks, B. (1979). Beginning Phonics (12 Cassettes 24, Lessons No. P-1). Jonesboro, AR: ESP, Inc.

Brooks, B. (1979). Learning to Think (12 Cassettes, 24 Lessons No. K-7). Jonesboro, AR: ESP, Inc.

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EQUIPMENT

Cassette Tape Player

Twelve Earphones

Listening Station for Twelve Earphones.

APPENDIX C

GOOD LISTENER PRACTICES
AND
PRACTICES FOR A GOOD LISTENER
IN A GROUP DISCUSSION

GOOD LISTENER PRACTICES

1. Clear your desk of unnecessary materials.
2. Do not talk or play.
3. Look at the speaker.
4. Think carefully about what the speaker is saying.

RULES FOR A GOOD LISTENER IN A GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Raise your hand before speaking.
2. Be involved.
3. Stick to the point being discussed.
4. Wait for the speaker to finish before asking questions.
5. Work and think together during a group discussion.

LESSON PLAN FORM FOR DAILY READING CYCLE

TEACHER: GRADE: LEVEL: DATE: TIME:

FOLLOW-UP

Supplementary Materials

_____

_____

Other: _____

_____

_____

Cut and Paste: _____

_____

LISTENING

Listening:

ESP _____	Ideal _____
Vowel _____	Vowel _____
Consonant _____	Consonant _____
Cluster ____	Cluster _____
Digraph ____	Digraph _____
Other _____	Other _____
Barnell-Loft:	Unit _____

Other: _____

INSTRUCTION GROUP: ____

Lesson: _____

_____ Part: _____

T.E. pages: _____

Assessment Text pages: _____

Instructional Vocabulary: _____

_____

_____

Workbook pages: _____

Skills Practice pages: _____

Other: _____

LISTENING

Listening:

ESP _____	Ideal _____
Vowel _____	Vowel _____
Consonant _____	Consonant _____
Cluster ____	Cluster _____
Digraph ____	Digraph _____
Other _____	Other _____
Barnell-Loft:	Unit _____

Other: _____

INSTRUCTION GROUP: _____

Lesson: _____

_____ Part: _____

T.E. pages: _____

Assessment Text pages: _____

Instructional Vocabulary: _____

_____

_____

Workbook pages: _____

Skills Practice pages: _____

Other: _____

FOLLOW-UP

Supplementary Material

_____

_____

Other: _____

_____

_____

Cut and Paste: _____

_____

_____

_____

INSTRUCTION GROUP: _____

Lesson: _____

_____ Part: _____

T.E. pages: _____

Assessment Text pages: _____

Instructional Vocabulary: _____

_____

_____

Workbook pages: _____

Skills Practice pages: _____

Other: _____

_____

FOLLOW-UP

Supplementary Materials

_____

_____

Other: _____

_____

_____

Cut and Paste: _____

_____

LISTENING

Listening:

ESP _____	Ideal _____
Vowel _____	Vowel _____
Consonant _____	Consonant _____
Cluster ____	Cluster _____
Digraph ____	Digraph _____
Other _____	Other _____
Barnell-Loft:	Unit _____

Other: _____